

KINGDOM PRAYER & STUDY GUIDE
WEEK 7:

"FASTING FOR SPIRITUAL ALIGNMENT"

FEBRUARY 24-MARCH 2, 2019

FOLLOWING
JESUS:

EXPLORING CHRISTIAN

"BEST PRACTICES"

FOR A MEANINGFUL LIFE



WINDSOR VILLAGE
Church Family

FOLLOWING JESUS:

**EXPLORING CHRISTIAN
“BEST PRACTICES”
FOR A MEANINGFUL LIFE**

*KINGDOM PRAYER & STUDY GUIDE
FEBRUARY 24-MARCH 2, 2019*

**Week 7:
FASTING FOR SPIRITUAL ALIGNMENT**

© 2019 Caldwell Ministries.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publisher or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of any license permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency.

Scripture quotations marked ESV are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked MSG are taken from THE MESSAGE, copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Scripture quotations marked The Voice are taken from The Voice™. Copyright © 2012 by Ecclesia Bible Society. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked Judaica Press are from A New English Translation of the Text, Rashi and a Commentary Digest, copyright © 1982, edited by A. J. Rosenberg. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked OJB are taken from The Orthodox Jewish Bible fourth edition, OJB. Copyright © 2002, 2003, 2008, 2010, 2011 by Artists for Israel International. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked MOUNCE are taken from The Mounce Reverse-Interlinear™ New Testament (MOUNCE) Copyright © 2011 by Robert H. Mounce and William D. Mounce. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. "Reverse-Interlinear" is a trademark of William D. Mounce.

Scripture quotations marked Alter are taken from The Book of Psalms with Commentary, © 2007 by Robert Alter. Published by W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 2009. All rights reserved

Contents

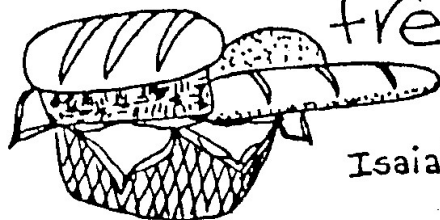
WEEK 7 (February 24-March 2, 2019) FASTING FOR SPIRITUAL ALIGNMENT

Day 43: “Is This Not the Fast I will Choose?”	7
Day 44: “Here I Raise My Ebenezer”	17
Day 45: “They Will Fast”	25
Day 46: “While They Were Worshiping and Fasting”	33
Day 47: “The Fasting Experience,” Part 1	41
Day 48: “The Fasting Experience,” Part 2	49
Day 49: “The Fasting Experience,” Part 3	57

Important Disclaimer for the Week: Only consider fasting (abstaining from food) if you are medically able to do so. Nursing mothers, diabetics, and persons with other chronic health conditions should eat according to their doctors’ recommendations. Always consult your health professional if you have questions about whether your health condition and/or medication allows you to participate in a traditional fast.



I
want you
to share your
Bread
with the
Hungry,
open your homes
to the homeless
Poor,
Remove the
yoke of
injustice,
Let the
oppressed go
free.



Isaiah: 58

Day 43:

“Is This Not the Fast I Will Choose?”

1. Center Down

Our breath prayer for today: As you inhale, whisper, **“Jesus, You satisfy...”** As you exhale, whisper, **“...our hungry hearts.”**

2. Slowly read aloud the following Scripture passage

Watch this scripture come alive on video: <http://b.link/Isaiah58Fasting>

“Shout! A full-throated shout!

Hold nothing back—a trumpet-blast shout!

Tell My people what’s wrong with their lives,

face My family Jacob with their sins!

They’re busy, busy, busy at worship,

and love studying all about me.

To all appearances they’re a nation of right-living people—

law-abiding, God-honoring.

They ask Me, ‘What’s the right thing to do?’

and love having Me on their side.

But they also complain,

‘Why do we fast and You don’t look our way?’

Why do we humble ourselves and You don’t even notice?’

“Well, here’s why:

*"The bottom line on your 'fast days' is profit.
You drive your employees much too hard.
You fast, but at the same time you bicker and fight.
You fast, but you swing a mean fist.
The kind of fasting you do
won't get your prayers off the ground.
Do you think this is the kind of fast day I'm after:
a day to show off humility?
To put on a pious long face
and parade around solemnly in black?
Do you call that fasting,
a fast day that I, God, would like?"*

"This is the kind of fast day I'm after:
*to break the chains of injustice,
get rid of exploitation in the workplace,
free the oppressed,
cancel debts.*
*What I'm interested in seeing you do is:
sharing your food with the hungry,
inviting the homeless poor into your homes,
putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad,
being available to your own families.*
*Do this and the lights will turn on,
and your lives will turn around at once.*
Your righteousness will pave your way.
The God of glory will secure your passage.
Then when you pray, God will answer.
You'll call out for help and I'll say, 'Here I am.'

(Isaiah 58:1-9, MSG)

For further exploration:

Videos: <http://religions.church/FastingIntroChuck>

<http://b.link/FeastingFasting> (*scholarly, 50 min*)

Article: <http://b.link/WesleyanFasting>

3. Kingdom Prayer

Glorious Father, we thank You for giving us Your peace and joy. Thank You for providing a life of hope, abundance, and destiny. Thank You for being our strength in times of weakness. You are great and most worthy of praise. You are to be feared above all gods. The earth is Yours and everything in it; the world and all its people belong to You. You laid the earth's foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean's depths. You are the King of glory; the Lord strong and mighty. You are the Lord, invincible in battle. O Lord, You have performed many wonders for us. Your plans for us are too numerous to list. You have no equal. We are grateful that when we, Your people, call to You for help, You hear and rescue us out of our troubles.

Omniscient Father, You said that You would give rest to all who are weary and heavy burdened. Your yoke is easy and Your burdens are light. We are supposed to trust in You with all of our hearts and not depend on our own understanding. We are to seek Your will in all that we do and You will show us which path to take. You are the God who will bring rest to our souls. We trust in Your Word and believe that Your Word will be operative in the hearts and souls of those with mental illnesses. We confess that when they walk in the

midst of trouble, You will revive them and stretch forth Your hand and save them. Lord, You have left Your gift of peace of mind with them so their hearts will not be afraid. Although they may be pressed on every side by troubles, they will not be crushed and broken. They may feel perplexed, but they will not give up and quit. They may be hunted down, but You will never abandon them. They may be knocked down, but they will get up and keep going. Father, we confess that they will lie down without fear and enjoy pleasant dreams. They will not be afraid of the threat of disaster or destruction for You are their security.

Loving Father, we ask You to replace their sadness with joy, defeat with victory, and fatigue with praise. Help those who feel depressed or sad to not focus on their circumstances, but rather focus on Your blessings in their lives. Remind them to praise You at all times. Holy Spirit, bring all things to their memory that concern the Father's plans for their lives. Give them power as they meditate on the Word. Help them to keep God's commandments and embrace them in their hearts. Father, help them not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds through the Word. Holy Spirit, we ask that You strengthen and renew their innermost being. Prevent the fiery darts of the enemy from consuming them. Help them to hear Your voice and obey Your will. Help them to find and surround themselves with Believers who are strong in the Word and in faith who will keep them accountable as they walk through this season.

Find God's promises concerning peace and begin to declare them over those people who you know are stressed and overburdened by life:

Merciful Father, forgive those in need of mental healing for their sins. Forgive them for worry and fear. Forgive them for being anxious. Forgive them for not being diligent in fasting and praying. Forgive them for not trusting You at all times. Lord, forgive me for *(list any sins that you have committed)*.

Holy Spirit, remind us all of those we need to forgive and help us to be quick to forgive. As for me, Holy Spirit, bring to my remembrance those I need to forgive. *(Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal names or faces of people that you may need to forgive. As He reveals them say, "I forgive name of person(s)." Now, trust the Lord to heal any wounds in your soul caused by unforgiveness.)*

Holy Spirit, help us all not to yield to temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

You are the Lord God Almighty! Let the whole world glorify You, Lord; let it sing Your praises! You will march forth like a mighty hero. You will come out like a warrior, full of fury. You will shout Your battle cry and crush all of Your enemies. You alone are worthy to receive glory and honor and power. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

4. Concepts to Consider

Within the Windsor Village Church Family we are not strangers to fasting. We regularly enter into times of reflection, repentance, fasting and prayer in preparation for the celebration of the Biblical feasts, in particular, around Passover and The Day of Atonement.

This week, we are exploring the Christian “best practice” of fasting as a means of spiritual awakening and awareness both personally and corporately. We will seek to answer the question, *“How and why should we make fasting a normal part of our Jesus-following way of life for the sake of proclaiming the Kingdom of God?”*

So to get started, let’s first define fasting as best we can, and then investigate why it seems to be so important in the Bible.

The English word “fasting” is derived from old Germanic roots that mean “to guard,” “hold firmly” or “to have control over oneself” (see: <http://b.link/EtymologyFast>). In the Hebrew Scriptures the word “tzoom” (צום) occurs 20+ times, and the Greek word “nace-TYOO-oh” (νηστεύω) is found in the New Testament also about 20 times.

If you look at all of these occurrences of “fasting” in the Bible we begin to see that it generally means to “abstain from food (and sometimes drink [Esther 4:16] and sex [1 Corinthians 7:5]) for the purposes of **worship** (1 Kings 19:8; Luke 2:37; Acts 13:2), **protection** (Ezra 8:21-23), **repentance** (Jonah 3:5), **earnestness in prayer** (2 Samuel 12:16), **preparation** (Matthew 4), **spiritual warfare** (Matthew 17:21), and/or **mourning** (2 Samuel 1:12).”

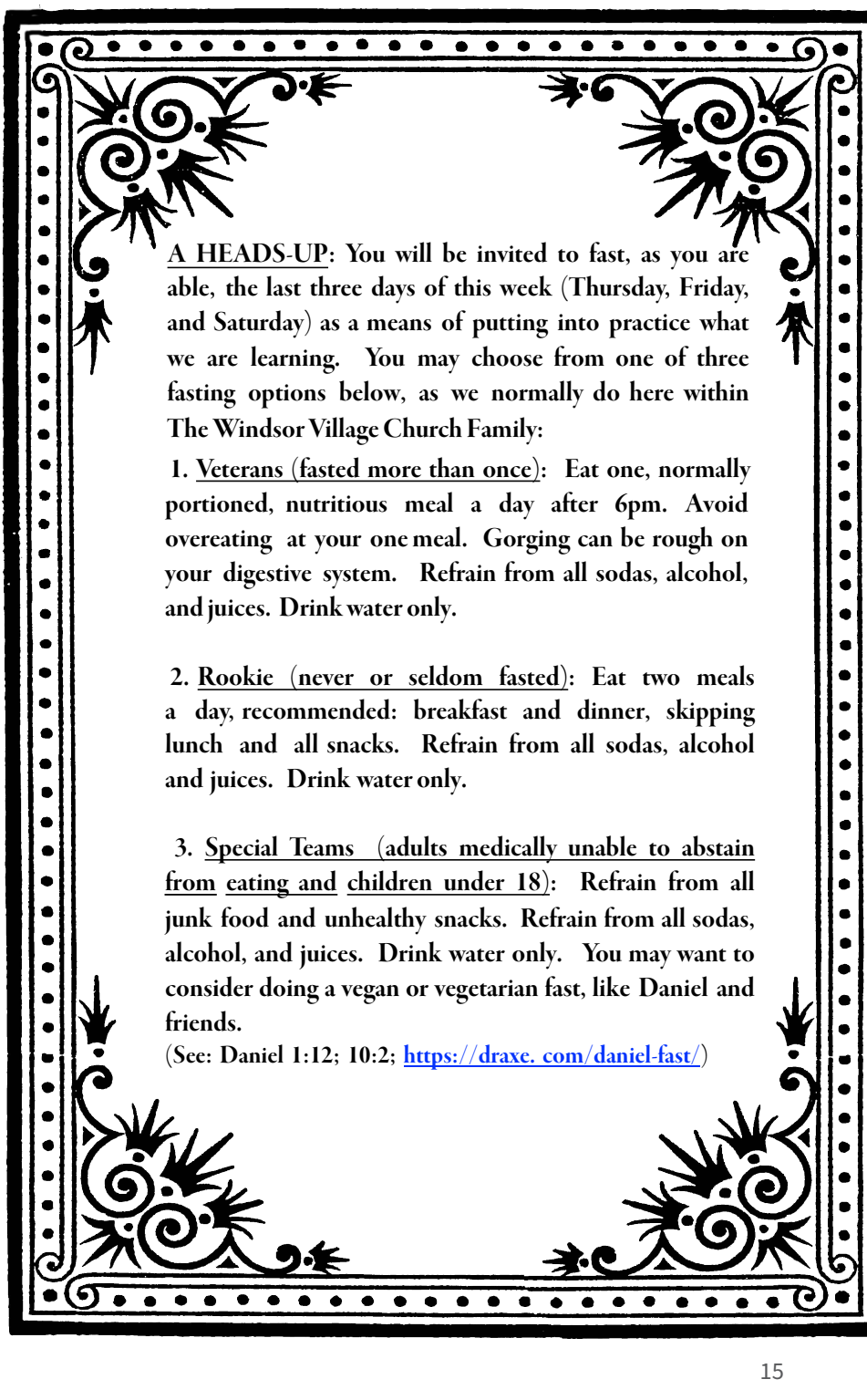
Indeed, if you've read the Bible even casually you've probably noticed that Jesus and other Biblical figures fasted for some of the reasons listed above. And if we boil all of that down what we realize is that ***fasting is at its core a response to the profound presence and purposes of God. Like worship and prayer, fasting is about whole-being alignment and re-alignment with God's heart and character (covenant love, justice, mercy--Micah 6:8).*** Fasting is never about trying to convince or manipulate God (see: Romans 1:25; Matthew 6:33).

Over the next few days we will be working to get ourselves realigned through the practical study and practice of Biblical fasting. But for today ask the Holy Spirit to help you "clear the underbrush" and lay the groundwork for the journey ahead by meditating on letting our "love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; **hold fast** to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' To the contrary, 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.'" Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:9-20, ESV)

5. Reflection Questions

a. Personal Reflection: What are your honest thoughts about fasting? If you've fasted before, think back on your experience. What was life-giving? What was challenging? If you've never fasted, why not?

b. Kingdom Reflection: Around the world, the church of Jesus Christ has fasted regularly over its 2000 year history. When we fast we join with believers around the world and across time who seek alignment with the heart of God for the sake of bringing His Kingdom to earth as it already is in His immediate presence (heaven). How does knowing fasting continues to be a part of normal Christian expression around the world change or affirm your thinking about fasting and its importance to God and His people?



A HEADS-UP: You will be invited to fast, as you are able, the last three days of this week (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday) as a means of putting into practice what we are learning. You may choose from one of three fasting options below, as we normally do here within The Windsor Village Church Family:

1. Veterans (fasted more than once): Eat one, normally portioned, nutritious meal a day after 6pm. Avoid overeating at your one meal. Gorging can be rough on your digestive system. Refrain from all sodas, alcohol, and juices. Drink water only.

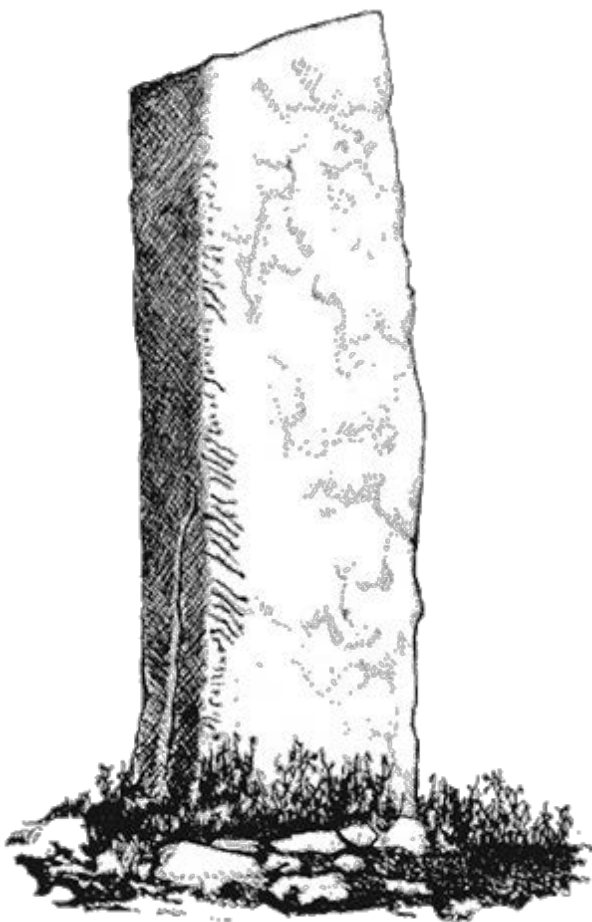
2. Rookie (never or seldom fasted): Eat two meals a day, recommended: breakfast and dinner, skipping lunch and all snacks. Refrain from all sodas, alcohol and juices. Drink water only.

3. Special Teams (adults medically unable to abstain from eating and children under 18): Refrain from all junk food and unhealthy snacks. Refrain from all sodas, alcohol, and juices. Drink water only. You may want to consider doing a vegan or vegetarian fast, like Daniel and friends.

(See: Daniel 1:12; 10:2; <https://draxe.com/daniel-fast/>)

Optional Time of Centering/Soaking:

If possible, take some time, perhaps 5 to 15 minutes, to get into a comfortable position and simply allow the Lord to minister to you at a deep level (Psalm 42:7). Turn off or put down all distractions. Close your eyes. Hold in your thoughts a meaningful word, phrase, or image from the Scripture passages you read today. Release all other thoughts and concerns into the Presence of the Lord. If your thoughts wander, that's okay, just gently return to your Scriptural word, phrase, or image. You may want to set a timer.



Day 44:

“Here I Raise My Ebenezer”

1. Center Down

Our breath prayer for today: As you inhale, whisper, “*You create springs in the desert...*” As you exhale, whisper, “*...and food from the barren land.*”

2. Slowly read aloud the following Scriptures

And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, saying, “If with all your heart, you are returning to the Lord, remove the foreign gods from your midst, and the Ashtaroath, and direct your heart toward the Lord, and serve Him alone, and He will save you from the hand of the Philistines. And the children of Israel removed the Baalim and the Ashtaroath, and served the Lord alone.

And Samuel said, “Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I shall pray to the Lord on your behalf.” And they assembled at Mizpah, and drew water, and poured (it out) before the Lord, and they fasted on that day, and said there, “We have sinned to the Lord.” And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah.

Now the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had assembled at Mizpah, and the lords of the Philistines went

up against Israel, and the children of Israel heard, and they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, "Cease not to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that He save us from the hand of the Philistines."

And Samuel took one sucking lamb and offered it up as a burnt offering, entirely to the Lord, and Samuel cried out to the Lord on behalf of Israel, and the Lord answered him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near for war against Israel, and the Lord thundered with a loud noise on that day, upon the Philistines, and threw them into a panic, and they were beaten before Israel. And the men of Israel went forth from Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and harassed them until they were below Bethcar.

And Samuel took one stone, and placed it between Mizpah and the peak (Shen), and he called its name Ebenezer, for he said, "Hitherto the Lord has helped us."

And the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the border of Israel, and the hand of the Lord was upon the Philistines all the days of Samuel. (1 Samuel 7:3-13, Judaica)

For further exploration:

Videos: <http://stone.video/StandingStone1>

Article: <http://b.link/StandingStones2> (scholarly)

Music: <http://b.link/JazzEbenezer> (just for fun!)

3. Kingdom Prayer

Heavenly Father, we praise and honor Your Name. Your Name is the Lord and we rejoice before You. You have been our home through all the generations. We praise You, the God of Israel, who lives from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and amen! O Lord, what a variety of things You have made. In wisdom, You have made them all. The earth is full of Your creatures. Lord, we thank You for our U.S. Military personnel and allies. We thank You for blessing our armed forces throughout history. We thank You for making our nation a mighty power in the world. Lord, You are a faithful, loving and compassionate God and we bless You.

Father, we declare that You are the light and salvation of our military personnel; they will not be afraid. You are their fortress and their protection from danger; they will not tremble. We declare that any enemy or foe who comes to attack them will stumble and fall. We confess that our soldiers will trust in You with all of their hearts and they will not depend on their own understanding. They will seek Your will in all that they do, and we know that You will show them which path to take. We declare that our military personnel are blessed and highly favored. They will submit themselves to God, resist the devil and he will flee from them. We cancel the assignment of anxiety, depression, anger, fear and confusion and declare that no weapon formed against them will prosper. We command God's order to prevail within the Veteran Affairs system.

Holy Spirit, show me how I can be a blessing to a military veteran:

Father, we ask that You continue to provide for the families of those soldiers who have been deployed to war. We cry out for an end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and ask that You will bring our soldiers home safely with sound minds and bodies. As our soldiers return home, Holy Spirit, help them to process all they have experienced. Heal any physical and emotional wounds. Please help them with their familial, social, and professional relationships. Lord, we ask that the wait times for appointments at the VA Hospital will be shortened and that each veteran will be treated with dignity and respect. Holy Spirit, we ask that You give our government officials the wisdom on how to cut down on the redtape that ensnares so many veterans from receiving all of the benefits they are entitled to. As a nation, help us to not to overlook or discount the sacrifices our military veterans have made for the freedom of our nation.

Father, please forgive our active and inactive military personnel and allies for their sins. Forgive them for lying, cheating, stealing, slander, strife, malice, envy, jealousy, selfishness, disobedience and rebellion. Forgive our nation for hypocrisy, slander, greed, racism, sexual immorality, injustice, elitism, hatred, and violence. Father, forgive the media for misrepresenting the truth. Father, forgive the Church for not fasting and praying for local, national, and world leaders, especially President Trump and his administration. Father, touch the hearts of our military personnel and allies to forgive others and help them to forgive. Lord, forgive me for *(list any sins that you have committed)*.

Holy Spirit, remind us all of those we need to forgive and help us to be quick to forgive. As for me, Holy Spirit, bring to my remembrance those I need to forgive. *(Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal names or faces of people that you may need to forgive. As He reveals them say, "I forgive name of person(s)." Now, trust the Lord to heal any wounds in your soul caused by unforgiveness.)*

Holy Spirit, help our active and inactive U.S. military and allies not into temptation; but deliver them from the evil one.

Lord, You reign. You dwell between the cherubim; let the earth be moved. You are great in Zion and highabove all people. Your Name is so great and awesome. You are Holy. Yours is the Kingdom, the power and glory, forever. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

***Scripture References for the Written Text (NKJV & NLT):** Psalm 90:1, Psalm 104:24, Psalm 27:1-2, Proverbs 3:5-6, Luke 1:28, James 4:7, Isaiah 54:17, I Corinthians 14:40, Matthew 6:13, Psalm 99:1-3.*

4. Concepts to Consider

Many ancient cultures used “standing stones” (think Stonehenge, the Hammurabi stele, Egyptian obelisks, Mongolian “Deer Stones,” etc.) to indicate important boundaries, places of divine significance (often near altars), as memorials to the honored dead, to “publish” important decrees or contracts, and even as memorable “gifts” to deities.

The “Ebenezer” (“eben-ha-AHzer,” אבן העזר “stone of help”) mentioned in 1 Samuel 7:12 above is a boundary, a memorial, is near a place of sacrifice, and also indicates a place of Divine significance and action. God did something miraculous and amazing for and through His people. It is interesting to note that Samuel erects this “standing stone” in the context of fasting (1 Samuel 7:6) that served as a tool in concert with ritual sacrifice (worship) and prayer to bring the People called Israel into alignment with God's desire for covenant loyalty (“put away your foreign gods...”). And when the people got into covenant alignment then God was free to act mightily on their behalf (1 Samuel 7:10).

Too often we can get in God's way. He won't cross the boundary of our free will, which is why “Ebenezer” more fully translates to “thus far... to this point... at this place... God has helped us.” But next time, where will your heart be?

Will you choose Me (covenant loyalty) or will you choose your “foreign gods” or trust in your military treaties and iron chariots?

5. Reflection Questions

a. Personal Reflection: Fasting is not transactional. God doesn’t love us more or less if we fast or don’t. God simply waits for humans made in His image to line up behind Him and “get with His program” by agreeing with the way He’s ordered the cosmos and defines good and evil. In other words, we get out of God’s way! Where have you now or in the past “gotten in God’s way?” Where in your life do you need God to “thunder” and bring victory?

b. Kingdom Reflection: The context of 1 Samuel 7 was corporate (“*gather all Israel...*”). How can we encourage one another in the Body of Christ to not to forsake the normative Christian practice of fasting?

Optional Time of Centering/Soaking:

If possible, take some time, perhaps 5 to 15 minutes, to get into a comfortable position and simply allow the Lord to minister to you at a deep level (Psalm 42:7). Turn off or put down all distractions. Close your eyes. Hold in your thoughts a meaningful word, phrase, or image from the Scripture passages you read today. Release all other thoughts and concerns into the Presence of the Lord. If your thoughts wander, that’s okay, just gently return to your Scriptural word, phrase, or image. You may want to set a timer.



Day 45:

“They Will Fast”

1. Center Down

Our breath prayer for today: As you inhale, whisper, “*We hunger and thirst...*” As you exhale, whisper, “*...for Your joyful Presence, O Lord.*”

2. Slowly read aloud the following Scripture

And then some of the disciples of John [the Baptizer] came [to question Jesus].

John’s Disciples: *What’s the story with fasting? We fast and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast!*

Jesus: *When you celebrate—as at a wedding when one’s dearest friend is getting married—you do not fast. The time will come when the Bridegroom will be taken from them. **Then My friends and followers will fast.** You would begin by washing and shrinking a patch you would use to mend a garment—otherwise, the patch would shrink later, pull away from the garment, and make the original tear even worse. You wouldn’t pour new wine into old wineskins. If you did, the skins would burst, the wine would run out, and the*

wineskins would be ruined. No, you would pour new wine into new wineskins—and both the wine and the wineskins would be preserved. (Matthew 9:14-17, VOICE)

For further exploration:

Video: <http://b.link/WineSkinExplainer>

<http://unity.church/oldwineskin>

3. Kingdom Prayer

Blessed Father, we thank You for our Church Family. Thank You for the opportunity to pray and fast. Thank You for coming close to us as we come close to You. We are grateful that You are our God and we bless Your wonderful Name. Heavenly Father, Your majestic Name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens. You have taught children and infants to tell of Your strength, silencing Your enemies and all who oppose You. With all our hearts, we will praise You and tell of the marvelous things You have done.

Gracious Father, as a Church Family, it is Your will that we fast. During our time of fasting, we will give our bodies to You because of all You have done for us. We will let them be living and holy sacrifices, the kind that You will find acceptable. For we know that this is truly how we can worship You. We will not copy the behavior and customs of this world, but we will let You, Father, transform us into new people by changing the way we think. Then, we will learn to know Your will for our lives, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Father, we confess that we will be diligent in prayer without ceasing during this time of fasting. We will meditate on Your Word day and night, and observe to do all that is within it.

Holy Spirit, show me those areas of my life that I need to surrender to the Father during the fast:

Holy Spirit, during our time of fasting please give us the power to overcome our fleshly appetites. As we pray during the fast, Father, please speak to us and give us wisdom, increase our discernment and show us Your plans for our lives. Lord, as we pray, please hear our prayers. Holy Spirit, teach us how to honor Jesus Christ, our Savior and to revere God, our Father, as we worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Righteous Father, forgive us as a Church Family for our sins. Please forgive those for stubbornness, selfishness and/or rebellion. Lord, forgive me for *(list any sins that you have committed)*.

Holy Spirit, remind us all of those we need to forgive and help us to be quick to forgive. As for me, Holy Spirit, bring to my remembrance those I need to forgive. *(Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to show you names or faces of people that you may need to forgive. As He reveals them to you, say, "I forgive name of person(s)." Now, trust the Lord to heal any wounds in your soul caused by unforgiveness.)*

Holy Spirit, help us all not to yield to temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

Holy Lord, You alone are God. You are great! You are robed with honor and majesty. You are dressed in a robe of light. You stretch out the starry curtain of the heavens. You lay the rafters of Your home in the rain clouds. You make the clouds Your chariot and ride upon the wings of the wind. The Lord of Heaven's Armies is Your Name! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture References for the Written Text: James 4:8, Psalm 8:1-2, Psalm 9:1, Romans 12:1-2, I Thessalonians 5:17, Joshua 1:8, Matthew 6:13, Psalm 104:1-3

4. Concepts to Consider

Jesus' assumption is that His "friends and followers will fast" after He is no longer physically present with them. Why? In context, the fasting question seems to be about the appropriateness (the when and how) of the fast. Jesus' authority as a rabbi (teacher) also seems to be called into questions here, as rabbis were held responsible for their students' behavior. But even more shocking in this context, is Jesus' bold proclamation that He is the Bridegroom of Israel--and by extension His nascent Church. The "new wine" and "new cloth" of the joyful arrival of Israel's long-suffering Husband is Good News, indeed! The Lord had finally come to rescue His people, walk among them, and make things right! (See also: Mark 2:18-22, Luke 5:31-39; John 2:25-30.)

Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, we see God using the metaphor of marriage and betrothal to indicate His covenant love for and commitment to His Chosen People, Israel (e.g., Hosea 2:16; Jeremiah 31:31-33; Isaiah 54:1; Leviticus 21:14).

This is why the Book of Revelation ends with a Wedding Feast. It is a consummating image of the Lamb of God, Jesus, the Bridegroom of restored Israel and the Church. But in the meantime, while we wait on the final culmination of all the Promises of God in Christ Jesus, it is appropriate to fast in preparation for and in anticipation of the ultimate return of our Bridegroom.

The Rabbinic sages who wrote the Jerusalem Talmud (*Tal-MOOD*, “*learn instruction*,” a compilation of ancient Jewish commentary and teaching) and later European rabbis taught that one’s wedding was similar to the Day of Atonement (which would have likely involved preparatory fasting). It was viewed as a day of forgiveness, wholeness, and (re)union. Any preparatory fasting would have been broken with the wedding feast after the marriage ceremony and seven days of feasting and joyfulness would have ensued!

“Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God

the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult

and give Him the glory,

for the marriage of the Lamb has come,

and His Bride has made herself ready;

it was granted her to clothe herself

*with fine linen, bright and pure”—for the fine linen is the
righteous deeds of the saints.*

*...Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the
Lamb.” (Revelation 19:6-9, ESV)*

5. Reflection Questions

a. Personal Reflection: If, as followers of Jesus, we are invited to the Wedding Supper of the Lamb (not just as guests but as an actual part of the Bride of Christ, the Church) how does that transform your ideas about fasting as preparation for your ultimate destiny in the New Creation?

b. Kingdom Reflection: How does it make you feel to know that through fasting you are actually involved in the purification of the Bride of Christ to make her ready for the Wedding Supper of the Lamb? What are your thoughts? How does that play out in how you view the world around you?

Optional Time of Centering/Soaking:

If possible, take some time, perhaps 5 to 15 minutes, to get into a comfortable position and simply allow the Lord to minister to you at a deep level (Psalm 42:7). Turn off or put down all distractions. Close your eyes. Hold in your thoughts a meaningful word, phrase, or image from the Scripture you read today. Release all other thoughts and concerns into the Presence of the Lord. If your thoughts wander, that's okay, just gently return to your Scriptural word, phrase, or image. You may want to set a timer.

Notes:



Day 46:

“While They Were Worshiping and Fasting...”

1. Center Down

Our breath prayer for today: As you inhale, whisper, “*Holy Spirit, set us apart...*” As you exhale, whisper, “*...for your service.*”

2. Slowly read aloud the following Scripture

Now there were in Antioch in the local church prophets and teachers, both Barnabas and Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So they, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived in Salamis, they began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews, and they also had John [Mark] as their assistant.

(Acts 13:1-5, MOUNCE)

For further exploration:

Video: <http://b.link/PaulBarnabasMission1>

3. Kingdom Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for The Velosia Kingdom Builders' Center in Kenya. Thank You for the volunteers and staff, for ministry and leadership of our brother Daniel Kibe and the blessed memory and lasting impact of Pastor Velosia Kibe. We thank You, Father, for providing food, clothing and shelter for each child. Thank You for the financial resources for the orphanage. We give thanks to You, Lord, and proclaim Your greatness. As Your grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving and You will receive more and more glory! Redeeming Father, we will let the whole world know what You have done. May the nations praise You, O God. Yes, may all the nations praise You.

Worthy Father, we come before You confessing continual success for The Velosia Kingdom Builders' Center in Kenya. Your Word tells us that pure and genuine religion in Your sight means caring for orphans in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt us. We will assist the poor in their need and the orphans who require help. We command justice to operate for each child in the orphanage and we destroy the assignments of oppression and devastation. As Your people, we will uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute. We decree that the children are being well-cared-for and protected. We declare that the spirit of excellence that was upon Daniel, Meshach,

Shadrach, and Abednego presides upon each child in the Children Center. In Jesus' Name, we decree that The Velosia Kingdom Builders' Children Center in Kenya is well maintained and managed.

Holy Spirit, touch the hearts of people to continue to give generously of their financial resources to aid in the expansion of the building projects so that more children can be served. Open doors of opportunity for more missions team to go and serve on the Children's Center campus. Lead the people of Kenya who are blessed with skills in construction to volunteer their time and service to the residential housing, agricultural, and library projects. Holy Spirit, touch the heart of the local medical personnel to give of their time and expertise to provide medical services to the children. Send anointed teachers who will inspire each child to fully develop the gifts and talents You have created in each of them.

Holy Spirit, show me how I can pray and fast for and be a blessing to The VKBC in Kenya:

Righteous Father, please forgive our sins. Forgive us for not praying and fasting consistently for the Children Center. Forgive the sins of those involved with The Velosia Kingdom Builder's Center in Kenya. Forgive any staff member for any mismanagement of time or resources. Lord, forgive me for ***(list any sins that you have committed)***.

Holy Spirit, remind those involved with The Velosia Kingdom Builders' Center in Kenya of those they need to forgive and help them to be quick to forgive. As for me, Holy Spirit, bring to my remembrance those I need to forgive. *(Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal names or faces of people that you may need to forgive. As He reveals them say, "I forgive name of person(s)." Now, trust the Lord to heal any wounds in your soul caused by unforgiveness.)*

Holy Spirit, remind those involved with The The Velosia Kingdom Builders' Center in Kenya not to yield to temptation but deliver them from the evil one.

Sovereign Lord, You alone stretched out the sky like a canopy and laid the foundations of the earth. You stir up the sea, causing its waves to roar. The Lord of Heaven's Armies is Your Name! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

4. Concepts to Consider

In the Scripture reading today we observe that Barnabas (*"son of encouragement"*) and Saul (*Shā'ul was his Hebrew name, who for the sake of relating contextually to non-Jews was later called Paul, his Roman Latin name. Similar name, different language*) were commissioned by the church in Antioch (Syria) and *"sent out by the Holy Spirit"* to spread the Good News of Jesus *"to the ends of the earth"* (Acts 1:8; Mark 16:15; Matthew 28: 19-20).

It's important also to notice that the call upon Saul and Barnabas was revealed while the assembled group of Church leaders was worshipping and fasting. Fasting here wasn't for repentance or

mourning--which was historically common--but rather, as a normative part of Christian worship and prayer to seek what God might desire to do next to further the mission of Jesus Christ.

For you see, up to this time the Church was still generally centered in Jerusalem, even some 15 years after the ascension of Jesus. Saul and Barnabas had just returned from a “mission of mercy” to Jerusalem to take offerings from the Antiochian believers to help feed the church members in Judea who had been affected by a regional food shortage (*see: Acts 11:27-30; ca. 46-51AD*). Upon their return, the prophetic and teaching leadership team of the Antiochian church gathered. They got into alignment with God’s agenda through worshipful and prayerful fasting.

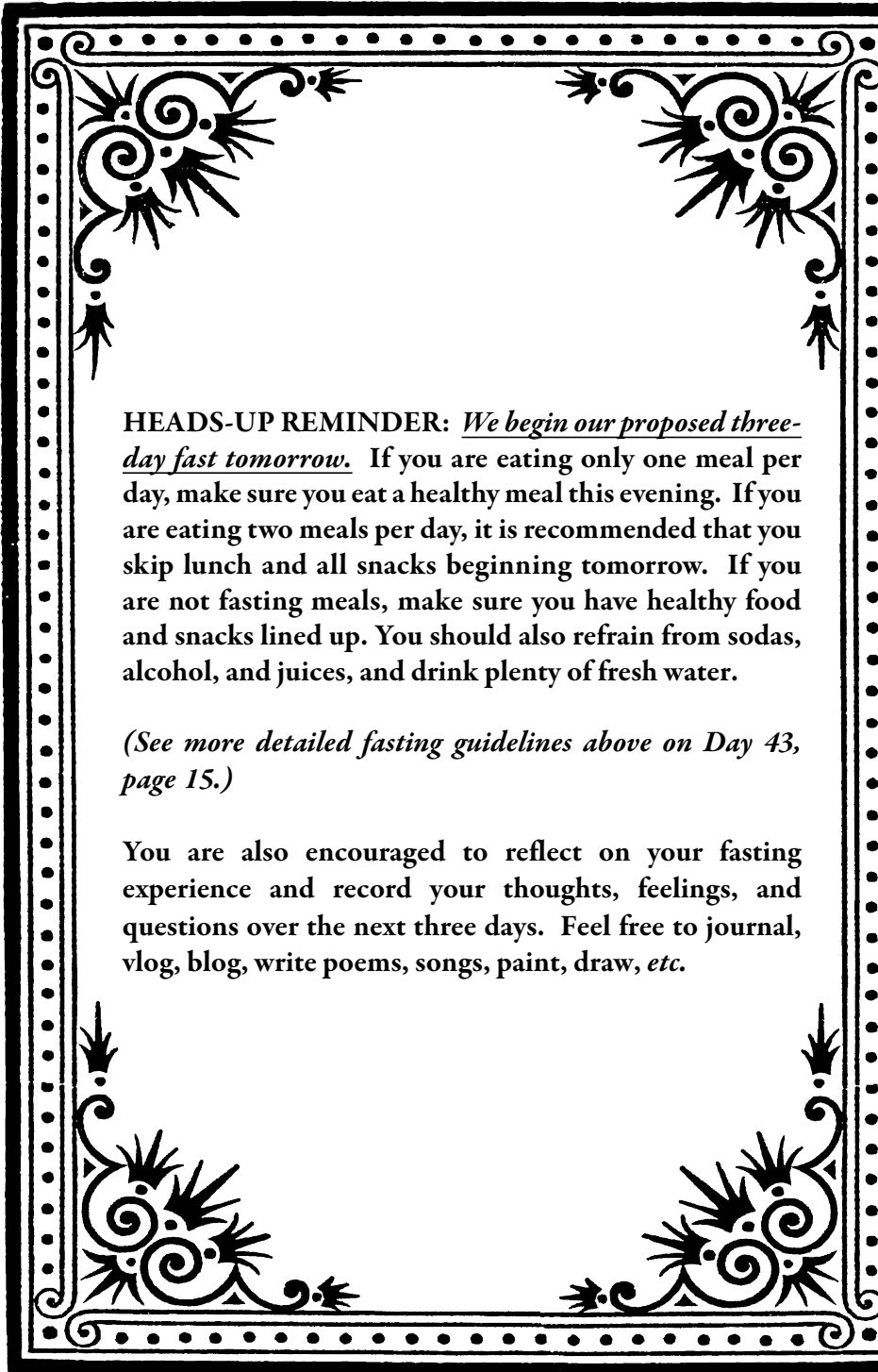
5. Reflection Questions

a. Personal Reflection: Have you ever considered fasting to be a normal, ordinary part of Christian practice? Why or why not?

b. Kingdom Reflection: What would happen if the whole Body of Christ began to worshipfully fast and pray? What might God reveal about His mission and agenda for the world?

Optional Time of Centering/Soaking:

If possible, take some time, perhaps 5 to 15 minutes, to get into a comfortable position and simply allow the Lord to minister to you at a deep level (Psalm 42:7). Turn off or put down all distractions. Close your eyes. Hold in your thoughts a meaningful word, phrase, or image from the Scripture you read today. Release all other thoughts and concerns into the Presence of the Lord. If your thoughts wander, that's okay, just gently return to your Scriptural word, phrase, or image. You may want to set a timer.



HEADS-UP REMINDER: *We begin our proposed three-day fast tomorrow.* If you are eating only one meal per day, make sure you eat a healthy meal this evening. If you are eating two meals per day, it is recommended that you skip lunch and all snacks beginning tomorrow. If you are not fasting meals, make sure you have healthy food and snacks lined up. You should also refrain from sodas, alcohol, and juices, and drink plenty of fresh water.

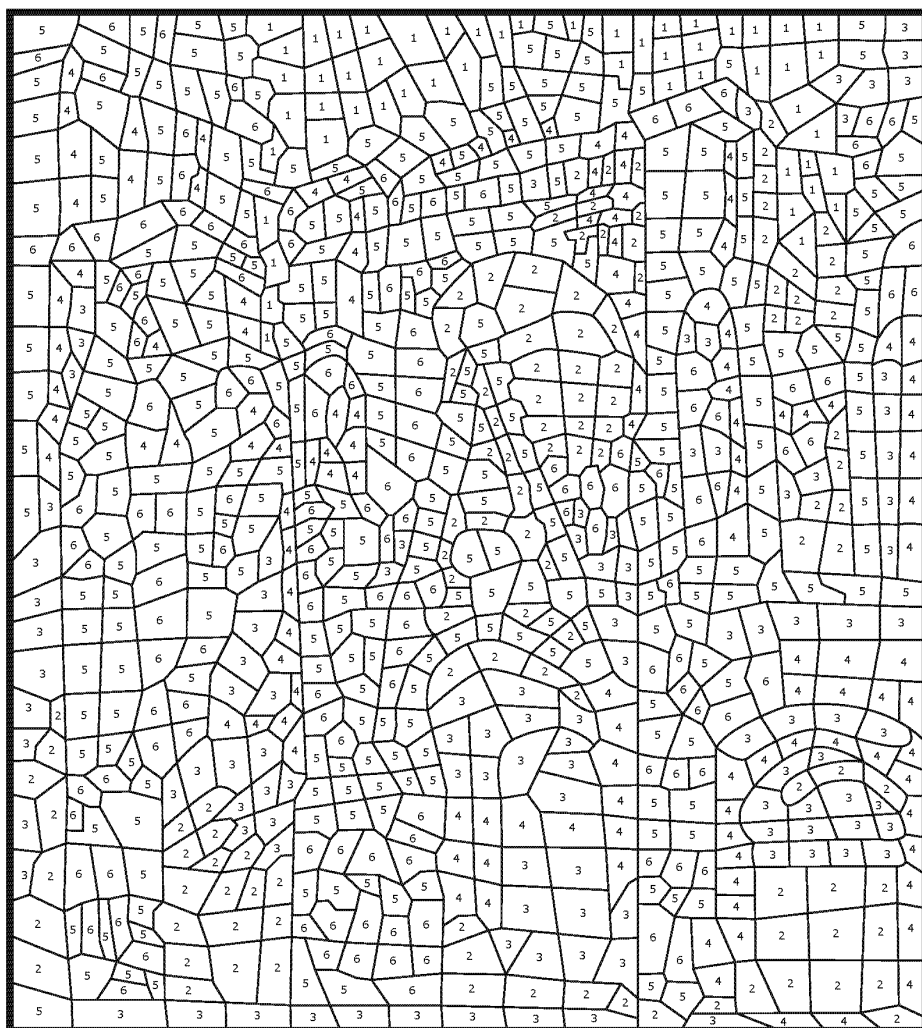
(See more detailed fasting guidelines above on Day 43, page 15.)

You are also encouraged to reflect on your fasting experience and record your thoughts, feelings, and questions over the next three days. Feel free to journal, vlog, blog, write poems, songs, paint, draw, *etc.*

Color by Numbers: Le Portail

ARTIST: Claude Monet

1	2	3	4	5	6
Blue	Red	Orange	Purple	Cream	Yellow



Copyright Homemade-Preschool.com

Day 47:

“The Fasting Experience,” Part 1

1. Center Down

Our breath prayer: As you inhale, whisper, “*Your face, O Lord...*” As you exhale whisper, “*...do we seek.*”

2. Slowly read aloud the following Scripture

Rescue me, God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I have sunk in the slime of the deep, and there is no place to stand. I have entered the watery depths, and the current has swept me away. I am exhausted from my calling out. My throat is hoarse. My eyes fail from hoping for my God.

...

*Master, O Lord of armies let those who seek You be not disgraced through me, God of Israel. Because for You I have borne reproach [disdain], disgrace has covered my face. Estranged I have been from my brothers, and an alien to my mother's sons. For the zeal of Your house has consumed me, the reproach of Your reproachers has fallen on me. **And in fasting I wept from [afflicting] my being [nephesh]--[my affliction] became a reproach for me. I made sackcloth my garment and became for them a byword [an example to be mocked].***

...

God, as befits Your great kindness, answer me with Your steadfast rescue. Save me from the mire, that I not drown. Let me be saved from my foes and from the watery depths. Let the waters' current not sweep me away and let not the deep swallow me, and let the Pit not close its mouth on me. Answer me, LORD, for Your kindness is good, in Your great compassion turn to me. And hide not Your face from Your servant, for I am in [dire] straits. Hurry, answer me.

(Psalm 69:1-4; 7-12; 14b-18, Alter)

For further exploration:

Videos: <http://study.watch/NefeshBibleProject>

<http://b.link/JoelGreenNefesh> (scholarly, 8min)

Article: <http://b.link/SBLaffliction>

3. Kingdom Prayer

Our Father, we thank You for demonstrating Your loving-kindness and tender mercies towards us. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem us from the power of the evil one. Thank You for calling us to fast. We are thankful for Your presence in our lives. Lord, there is none like You. You are great and Your Name is full of power. Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? That title belongs to You alone. Among all the wise people of the earth and in all the kingdoms of the world, there is no one like You.

Omniscient Father, we know that there is a season for everything. There is a time for every purpose under heaven. As the Body of Christ, we make our declaration to set aside time to fast and spend time with You. By faith, we expect to experience Your love, power, and presence as we afflict our souls with prayer and fasting. We will re-evaluate our lives, repent for our sins, and draw closer to You.

Holy Spirit, help us to reflect, repent, reconcile, remember, and rejoice. Cause the mind of Christ to be in us. Please help us to slow down and spend quality time with You. Reveal to us what needs to be changed or improved in our lives. Help us to mend broken relationships. Continue to touch our hearts about the Father's will for our lives. Cause Your peace to settle into our hearts.

Compassionate Father, forgive us for all acts of sinfulness including: idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, sexual immorality, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, and revelries. Forgive us for not always obeying Your Word and spending enough time with You. Forgive those who do not choose to fast this week. Lord, forgive me for *(list any sins that you have committed)*.

Holy Spirit, remind us all of those we need to forgive and help us to be quick to forgive. As for me, Holy Spirit, bring to my remembrance those I need to forgive. *(Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal names or faces of people that you may need to forgive. As He reveals them say,*

“I forgive name of person(s).” Now, trust the Lord to heal any wounds in your soul caused by unforgiveness.)

Holy Spirit, help us all not to yield to temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

Lord, You are the only true God. You are the living God and the everlasting King! The whole earth trembles at Your anger and the nations cannot stand up to Your wrath. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

4. Concepts to Consider

“So it begins, the great battle of our time.” (Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings*.) At some level, fasting is indeed a battle. Empowered by the partnering grace of the Holy Spirit we do battle with ourselves, aka our “*nephesh*” (“*ne-FESH*” נֶפֶשׁ “throat/being-ness/animal appetites”) in order to bring all that we are into Godly alignment. In fasting we push back against the “*desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes and the pride of possession*” (1 John 2:16).

“Afflicting” (“*a-NAH*” אָנָה) our *nephesh* generally means to “submit” or “bow down” our whole being. Since the folly of our First Parents in the garden of Eden, our *nephesh* has tended to embrace its more animalistic temperament. You see, both humans and animals are *nephesh* but only humans, by the grace of God, have been given a “*neshamah*” (“*neh-SHA-mah*,” נִשְׁמָה “the breath of God”) as a Divinely-endowed awareness of our Creator, and faculty for reasoning that (theoretically) prevents us from

acting more like animals than human beings created in God's image.

So as you begin your fasting experience today, be of good courage! Instead of "pushing through," consider "leaning into" the discomfort. Work *with* the pain rather than resist it. This principle is true for birthing mothers, people on a healing journey, and fasting "*nephesh tamers*."

*"If you sit down to dine with a ruler, you better have a good idea who is sitting in front of you (whether he is stingy or generous), and you should put a knife into your jaw rather than embarrass yourself with gluttonous behavior. **Be the master of your nephesh** (throat/being/animal appetite)." (Proverbs 29:1-2, PKO paraphrase)*

Today as you fast consider filling the time you would have spent eating with Scriptural prayers. Feast on the Word. Have a sit-dow "Soul Feast" with your Creator and Savior who loves you. The following websites offer organized Scriptural prayers for many times throughout the day.

See: <http://b.link/DivineHours>

or:

<https://universalis.com/>

Also, please reflect on your experience with fasting in some tangible way (*journal, blog, vlog, create, etc.*)

5. Reflection Questions

a. Personal Reflection: As you enter the fast today, what are your thoughts? Feelings? With the help of the Holy Spirit, release all expectations and allow God to set the agenda for your fast.

b. Kingdom Reflection: What world event, problem, or issue has God placed on your heart to pray for as you fast?

Optional Time of Centering/Soaking:

If possible, take some time, perhaps 5 to 15 minutes, to get into a comfortable position and simply allow the Lord to minister to you at a deep level (Psalm 42:7). Turn off or put down all distractions. Close your eyes. Hold in your thoughts a meaningful word, phrase, or image from the Scripture you read today. Release all other thoughts and concerns into the Presence of the Lord. If your thoughts wander, that's okay, just gently return to your Biblical word, phrase, or image. You may want to set a timer.

Color by Numbers: The Creation of Adam

ARTIST: Michelangelo



Light Blue



Light Brown



Cream



Dark Brown



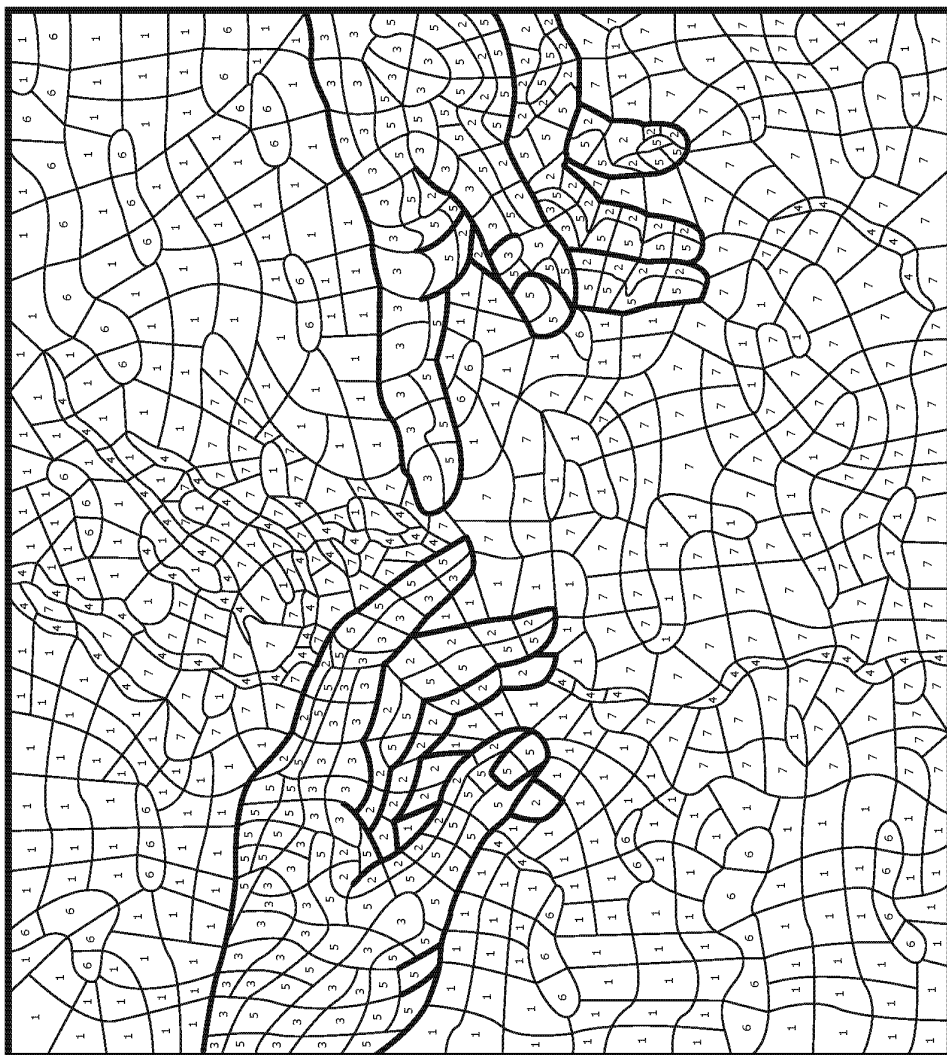
Peach



Light Pink



Yellow



Copyright Homemade-Preschool.com

Day 48:

“The Fasting Experience,” Part 2

1. Center Down

Our breath prayer for today. As you inhale, whisper, “*We have stilled our hearts...*” As you exhale whisper, “*...and wait for You to stir our being.*”

2. Slowly read aloud the following Scripture

[And Jesus said,] “when you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces so that they will appear to others as fasting; I tell you the truth, they have their reward. But when you fast anoint your head with oil and wash your face so that you will not appear to others as fasting, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

(Matthew 6:16-18, MOUNCE)

For further exploration:

Sermon: <http://sermon.social/WesleyFasting22>

Audio: <http://b.link/WesleyAudio22> (hear sermon #22 read)

3. Kingdom Prayer

Heavenly Father, our souls honor You. Thank You for our family relationships. We thank You for peace umpiring our familial relationships and interactions. Lord, we thank You for fulfilling Your plans and purposes in our lives and for surrounding us with favor like a shield. Thank You for blessing us continually with Your loving-kindness and tender mercies. Your mercy endures forever. You are great and Your power is absolute. Your understanding is beyond comprehension. We love You and extol Your Holy Name. Out of the mouths of babes and infants, You have ordained strength. What are mere mortals that You should think of them, human beings that You should care for them?

Glorious Father, we declare that our families will live in peaceful habitations, in safe dwellings, and in quiet resting places. Stability, salvation, love, wisdom and knowledge abide in each home. Lord, we rebuke the spirits of argument, slander, strife, perversion, violence, offense, lies, rebellion, disobedience and cruelty in our families. We break all soul ties, strongholds and generational curses in our family bloodlines. No weapon formed against our families will prosper. We confess that everything the devil means for evil will be turned around by our God for the good of our families. We call for a spiritual renewal and restoration in our families. Father, we will hold fast to the confession of our faith without wavering. The love of God will reign supreme in our homes and the peace of God is an umpire in our family relationships. We decree that because our families seek Your Kingdom above all else, and live righteously, we will have everything that we stand in need of.

Holy Spirit, I declare the following promises of God to manifest in my family:

Wonderful Father, we ask that You give our family members one heart and put a new spirit within all of us. Where there are strained relationships in our families, please turn our hearts back to one another. Holy Spirit, please begin to heal the wounds that family secrets have inflicted on the souls and minds of some of our members. Lead them to competent Christian counseling to help them process their pain. Give us Your wisdom. Let discretion preserve us and understanding keep us from the way of evil. Please unite our families closer together. Father, open the lines of communication in our homes so that there is a good rapport in our families. Please keep our children and youth as the apples of Your eye. Let Your peace, love and understanding reside in our families. Lord, some of our families are in dire need of help. Please rescue them and give them wisdom on how to begin to repair and rebuild those damaged relationships.

Merciful Father, please forgive our families for sin. Forgive us for allowing our jobs to be a greater priority than our families. Forgive us for taking our loved ones for granted. Forgive us for not praying for our family members consistently. Forgive us for strife, anger, envy, jealousy, sexual immorality, and for verbal or physical abuse within our homes. Lord, forgive me for ***(list any sins that you have committed)***.

Holy Spirit, remind us all of those we need to forgive and help us to be quick to forgive. As for me, Holy Spirit, bring to my remembrance those I need to forgive and help me to forgive. *(Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal names or faces of people that you may need to forgive. As He reveals them say, "I forgive name of person(s)." Now, trust the Lord to heal any wounds in your soul caused by unforgiveness.)*

Holy Spirit, help our families not to yield to temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

Sovereign Lord, You are King! You are robed in majesty and armed with strength. The world stands firm and cannot be shaken. Your throne has stood from time immemorial. You are from the everlasting past. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

4. Concepts to Consider

Today we will consider what it means to fast as a Wesleyan follower of Jesus. Anglican pastors John and Charles Wesley (founders of Methodism) worked and lived in late 1700's England and methodically and diligently sought to follow the heart of God.

One of the outward expressions of their faith was regular fasting. John generally fasted two days a week (Tuesday night to Wednesday afternoon and Thursday night to Friday afternoon). A "Thursday evening-Friday sundown" pattern was typical for most Anglican Christians during his lifetime.

In John Wesley's sermon on fasting taken from Matthew 6, he warns us that in order to rightly practice the discipline of fasting, one should avoid extremes and should therefore neither undervalue nor overvalue it, because it is not an end unto itself. Rather, fasting is a means of grace, *"that God Himself has ordained, and in which therefore, when it is duly used, He will surely give His blessing."*

Wesley goes on to give the following practical guidelines for fasting:

1. Let it be done unto the Lord, with our eyes singly fixed on Him. (*He is the focus of our fast. We don't fast in order to try and manipulate or coerce God to do what we want, but rather, when we fast we have a better chance of getting out of God's way and acting in God's grace.*)
2. Let us beware of fancying that we merit anything of God by fasting. (*God doesn't love us more because we fast or less because we don't.*)

3. The body may sometimes be afflicted too much by fasting. *(Fasting should not become an “extreme spiritual sport.” There are no spiritual merit badges for “harshest or most earnest fast.” If not done sensibly, fasting can harm the body.)*

4. Let us care to afflict our souls as well as our bodies. *(As we saw yesterday, submitting our animal appetites to God’s grace in fasting helps us stay in alignment with God’s heart and desire for us.)*

5. With fasting, let us always join in fervent prayer.

Today as you fast consider continuing to fill the time you would have spent eating with Scriptural prayers and meditations.

See: <http://b.link/DivineHours>

or:

<https://universalis.com/>

5. Personal and Kingdom Reflections: please continue to reflect on your experience with fasting in some tangible way *(journal, blog, vlog, create, etc.)* What are you feeling? What are you thinking? What has the Lord revealed to you about yourself? About the world?

Optional Time of Centering/Soaking

If possible, take some time, perhaps 5 to 15 minutes, to get into a comfortable position and simply allow the Lord to minister to you at a deep level (Psalm 42:7). Turn off or put down all distractions. Close your eyes. Hold in your thoughts a meaningful word, phrase, or image from the Scripture you read today. Release all other thoughts and concerns into the Presence of the Lord. If your thoughts wander, that's okay, just gently return to your Biblical word, phrase, or image. You may want to set a timer.

Color by Numbers: The Starry Night

ARTIST: Vincent van Gogh

1
Light Blue

2
Orange

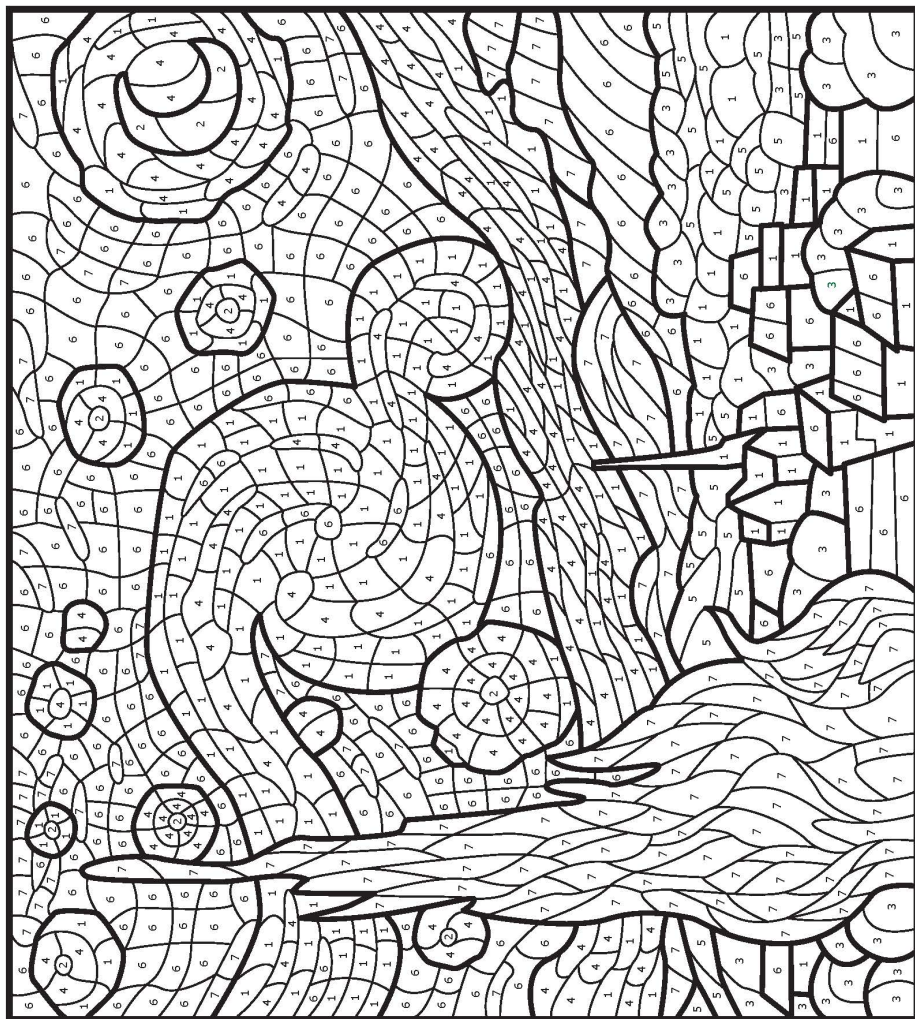
3
Dark Green

4
Yellow

5
Light Green

6
Dark Blue

7
Black



Copyright Homemade-Preschool.com

Day 49:

“The Fasting Experience,” Part 3

1. Center Down

Our breath prayer for today. As you inhale, whisper, “*You are enough, O Lord...*” As you exhale whisper, “*...You are all we truly need.*”

2. Slowly read aloud the following Scripture

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, He was hungry.

The devil said to Him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” (Deuteronomy 8:3)

And the devil took Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to Him, “To You I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If You, then, will worship me, it will all be Yours.” And Jesus answered him, “It is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.” (Deuteronomy 6:13)

And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,' and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone." (Psalm 91:11-12)

And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" (Deuteronomy 6:16; Isaiah 7:12) And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

(Luke 4:1-13, ESV)

For further exploration:

Article: <http://holy.news/WaltFasting>

Video: <http://b.link/JungFastingBiola> (scholarly, 30 min)

3. Kingdom Prayer

Abba Father, we thank You for calling us to worship You in Spirit and in Truth. Thank You, Jesus, for teaching us Your Word and sustaining us during our fast. Holy Spirit, we thank You for bringing God's Word to our remembrance which teaches us to feast and fast. O God, You are our God; we earnestly search for You. Your unfailing love is better than life itself; how we praise You! We will praise You as long as we live, lifting up our hands to You in prayer. You satisfy us more than the richest foods. We will praise You with songs of joy.

Glorious Father, our lives belong to You. Lord, we will come before You joyfully declaring that the coming days will be filled with happiness and celebration with our sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, neighbors, orphans and widows from our towns. You have blessed us with good things and have given us success in all our work. We declare that our lives will be characterized by joy in Your presence. We are expecting Your anointing, healing, powerful, joyful, peaceful, and loving Presence to manifest in our lives.

Heavenly Father, we pray for Your provision; to give us our daily bread. Jesus, be our Living Bread. Help us to be grateful for Your bountiful provision of all that we need so we may be generous and hospitable, and remember Your manifold blessings in our lives.

Holy Father, when You brought Your people out of Egypt, they refused to obey and did not remember the miracles You had done for them. Instead, they became stubborn and arrogant. But You are a God of forgiveness, gracious and merciful, slow to become angry, and rich in unfailing love. You did not abandon them. In Your mercy, Father, forgive those of us for being slow or reluctant to be grateful for the many blessings You have bestowed upon us. Forgive those who are disobedient to Your Word. Lord, forgive me for *(list any sins that you have committed)*.

Holy Spirit, remind us all of those we need to forgive and help us to be quick to forgive. As for me, Holy Spirit, bring to my remembrance those I need to forgive. *(Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to show you names or faces of people that you may need to forgive. As He shows you, say aloud, "I forgive name of person(s)." Now, trust the Lord to heal any wounds in your soul caused by unforgiveness.)*

Holy Spirit, help us all not to yield to temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

Lord, You are King! Let the nations tremble! You sit on Your throne between the cherubim. Let the whole earth quake! You sit in majesty in Jerusalem, exalted above all the nations. Let them praise Your great and awesome Name. Your Name is holy! Mighty King, lover of justice, You have established fairness. You have acted with justice and righteousness throughout Israel. We exalt You, Lord our God! We bow low before Your feet, for You are holy! In Jesus' Name, Amen!

4. Concepts to Consider

Today we conclude our fasting experience by focusing on Jesus and His 40 days in the wilderness. What can we glean from His example?

The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) record the 40-day fast of Jesus that redeems the 40 years of Israelite desert wandering, and resembles the 40-day fasts of Moses and Elijah (Exodus 34:27-28; 1 Kings 19:8).

Jesus is the New Moses and Elijah. He is like them, only better! He arrives on the scene to restore His people through mending the broken image-bearing sons of Adam and daughters of Eve themselves. He came not to simply point out bad external behavior, but to internally satisfy the hungry human heart with Himself, the Bread of Heaven (John 6:33). No ordinary leader, rabbi or prophet could accomplish that task. Only the Living Word and Wisdom of God--*God Himself*--could come and set things back in order and give humanity back their “God-and-others” oriented heart, as it was meant to be from the foundation of the world.

As we’ve said all along, fasting is primarily about realignment with God’s character and purposes. Jesus, of course, didn’t need RE-alignment, but rather, His 40-day fast keenly represented *His choice* to align and focus His life’s intentions upon the Divine mission, calling, and identity at hand. No longer is He just “Mary and Joseph’s boy from Nazareth,” but He is accepting the role and authority He was born to walk in as the Son of God (*an allusion to Roman designations of divine attribution for the Caesars*) and Son of Man (*The Divine/Human Figure in Daniel 7:13-14*).

Finally, Jesus’ example (especially in the Gospel of Luke) demonstrates that no mission and no life can be fully manifested without the animating work of the Holy Spirit. It is Jesus’ coordination with the Spirit that sends Him into the 40-day desert experience and enables Him to overcome the temptations of the devil (through His Word!). And it is the Spirit that enlivens Him with the authority to turn the fast into a life characterized by “eating and drinking” and feasting (Luke 7: 33-35) primarily on the presence of His Father. All of this was meant to point toward the culminating “Wedding Supper of the Lamb” that, as followers of the fasting and feasting Jesus, we are called to enjoy!

May our lives be filled with joy as we allow the Holy Spirit to shape and mold our lives more and more into His Image. Hallelujah!

5. Reflection Questions

a. Personal Reflection. As you look back on this week and your fasting experience, what have you learned about yourself, your addictions and your ability to justify? How will you move into the next week more sensitive to the promoting of the Holy Spirit?

b. Kingdom Reflection.

How can the fruit of fasting before the Lord and feasting on His Presence and His Word empower you to take the “spiritual sustenance” you’ve received into your job, family, friendships, and your everyday tasks? How and why should we make fasting a normal part of our Jesus-following way of life for the sake of proclaiming the Kingdom of God?



Windsor Village Church Family

6011W. Orem, Houston, TX 77085

713-723-8187

Prayer Power Line: 713-721-4821

www.kingdombuilders.com

www.facebook.com/incitewindsor

www.prayerinstitute.com

Kirbyjon H. Caldwell, Senior Pastor